

SECRET

OCT-24-47

Digest file

25X1

3 April 1953

MEMORANDUM TO: Deputy Director/Intelligence
FROM: Assistant Director, Current Intelligence
SUBJECT: Periodical Revision of the National Intelligence Digest

1. O/CI concurs in the recommendation, made in the enclosure, for a joint O/CI-O/NE Digest Review Board to revise periodically the National Intelligence Digest. As members of this board O/CI will nominate [redacted] Deputy Chairman of the Publications Board, and [redacted] Situation Room Division.

2. You are aware that O/CI is planning to publish a Current Intelligence Handbook series, world-wide in scope, to meet a need repeatedly expressed by you and most recently by Mr. Amory. The Handbooks are to be quite specific, detailed and current. The Digest, as the enclosure observes, presents "general intelligence on all areas that concern the NSC" and cannot be "either definitive or up to the minute." In short, the latter is a relatively brief summary of intelligence conclusions and is of primary interest to the intelligence user; the former will be a more detailed treatment of current intelligence events and will be of primary interest to the intelligence producer. There is need, I feel, for both types of publications, particularly in those higher echelons where the same person must serve variously as intelligence user and intelligence producer.

3. Mr. W. P. Bundy of O/NE is aware of our plans for the Handbook series and has agreed to work out with us a more exact delimitation between the two publications.

HUNTINGTON D. SHELDON

[redacted]
 Chief, Intelligence Staff

Orig & 1 - Addressee

Approved For Release 2005/11/29 : CIA-RDP79R00971A000100080028-8

1 - AD/CI
 1 - OS/Int
 1 - Mr. Bundy
 1 - [redacted]

SECRET

25X1
 25X1

25X1

25X1

DRAFT

SECRET

25X1

3 March 1953

PROBLEM

Periodical Revision of the National Intelligence Digest

FACTS

1. The Digest was done on the basis of intelligence received through 1 November. Since publication it has been revised to incorporate the contents of NIE-75/1 (Iran) and of NIE-64 (Part II) (Overall Soviet Bloc intentions through mid-1953). A revision to reflect NIE-63 (France) is in draft. The only other estimate that probably should be included at this moment is NIE-74 (Burma), though its changes from the existing treatment are minor.
2. The Digest has proved extremely useful to CIA's personnel concerned with NSC matters. It has also been used extensively by the NSC personnel, including Mr. Cutler. The extent to which it has been used by other NSC participants and high officials is unknown, at least to this writer. (I have never seen it actually brought to the table.) Demands from Messrs. Kyes and Easton in the Pentagon indicate that it had some eager readers there.
3. In round figures, there are 109 pages of text in the present Digest. Of these about 39 are derived from estimates, 10 are in the Estimate of the World Situation, and 60 are current-situation reports not based on estimates (though containing many estimative statements, both current and future, in a form more characteristic of O/NE than of O/CI publications). In the original preparation of the Digest, the portions not based on estimates were originally drafted in most cases by O/CI but were almost all reviewed by O/NE so that they represent a

SECRET

joint effort.

DISCUSSION

4. Function of the Digest. The Digest is, or can be:

a. A policy-maker's handbook of the best available general intelligence on all areas that concern the NSC.

b. A reference that will lead the eager reader quickly to the more detailed material contained in estimates, EIC papers, or other authoritative sources. In this respect, and in its maps and charts, the Digest should be useful not only to policy-makers but to "generalists" within the intelligence community.

In my judgment the Digest cannot be -- and no loose-leaf work should try to be -- either definitive or up to the minute.

5. Staleness of material. If this is a true picture of the Digest's function, it follows that the material must in any case show the date of preparation -- as is now done. It also follows, in my judgment, that:

a. No material should be badly out of date, so that Secretary Humphrey, reading his Times, knows that Mayer is Premier of France, though the Digest continues to discuss Pinay.

b. New estimates should be put in as soon as possible, if they represent any substantial change or if they represent a coordinated view on a really important point even if already covered in somewhat the same terms.

- 2 -

SECRET

SECRET

c. To avoid a hopeless multiplicity of dates of origin, and for working convenience and efficiency, there should be a stem-to-stern overhauling every six months or so.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of discussions with designated representatives of the Board and with AD/CI, I recommend the following procedures:

a. O/CI and O/NE designate two representatives each, of senior grade, to a Digest Review Board (perhaps under rotating chairmanship), to meet once a month (1) to consider whether revision is necessary of individual sections, and to lay on and review the necessary work in the event that material is believed to be so out of date as to be misleading or plainly destructive of the reader's confidence; (2) to review abstracts, prepared by O/NE, of estimates completed during the preceding month, for inclusion.

b. O/CI and O/NE each designate a staff man to keep continuing responsibility for the Digest, both men to assist in the monthly check-up, and the O/NE man to be charged particularly with abstracts of new estimates and the O/CI man to keep a particular watch on the graphic materials.

c. The Digest Review Board prepare a working plan for wholesale revision of the Digest on 1 May 1953.

SECRET